

CLAIMS

1. (amended) A method for enhancing the emulsification ability of gum arabic comprising a step of making unheated gum arabic into an aqueous solution, and a step of maintaining the thus-obtained aqueous solution at below 60°C.

2. (amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the concentration of the aqueous gum arabic solution is not higher than 50 mass %.

3. (amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the concentration of the aqueous gum arabic solution is 10 to 30 mass %

4. (amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the temperature at which the aqueous gum arabic solution is maintained is 5 to 40°C.

5. (amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the time for which the aqueous solution is maintained at below 60°C is at least 6 hours.

6. (amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the pH of the aqueous solution is 4.5 to 6 and the time for which the aqueous solution is maintained at below 60°C is at least 3 hours.

7. (amended) The method according to claim 1 which comprises a step of making unheated gum arabic into an aqueous solution under temperature conditions of below 60°C.

8. (amended) The method according to claim 7, wherein the temperature conditions are within the range of from 10 to 50°C.

9. (deleted)

10. (amended) A modified gum arabic with its
5 emulsification ability enhanced by a method of any one of claims
1 to 8.

11. (amended) The modified gum arabic according to
claim 10, wherein the unheated gum arabic belongs to the *Acacia*
10 *senegal* species, and the modified gum arabic with its
emulsification ability enhanced by the method set forth in claim
1 has a mass-average molecular weight of not less than 1.5
million.

12. (amended) An emulsifier containing the modified gum
arabic with its emulsification ability enhanced by the method of
any one of claims 1 to 8 as an active ingredient.

13. (amended) A method for preparing an emulsion
20 comprising the step of dispersing a hydrophobic material in a
hydrophilic solvent or dispersing a hydrophilic material in a
hydrophobic solvent, using the modified gum arabic with its
emulsification ability enhanced by the method of any one of
claims 1 to 8 as an emulsifier.

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14. The method for preparing an emulsion according
to Claim 13, wherein the emulsion is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion
which contains, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic
substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils,
30 oil-soluble flavors, oil-soluble colors, oil-soluble vitamins,
polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal oils, vegetable oils, sucrose
acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.

15. An emulsion prepared by the method according
35 to Claim 13.